

HOLMDEL TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

"A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE"



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Dear Parents,

Your child is already enjoying a wonderful reading and writing experience in school. Through our Reading Workshop, your child's language arts program provides opportunities to participate in reading as "real readers" do. It also allows us the opportunity to tailor instruction more individually and appropriately for each student in the class. In this way, more time is available for children to read. Research suggests that the amount of independent reading time children do in school is related to gains in reading achievement. Independent reading is also a major source of vocabulary growth and reading fluency.

However, we do not mean to suggest that students are left on their own to "just read." A balanced reading program with quality instruction involves many elements. In the Reading Workshop, students have an opportunity to:

- Listen to and respond to good literature.
- Participate in individual and small-group reading instruction and read individually and/or with other children.
- Select material at the appropriate level.
- Have lesson on phonics and word attack skills.
- Participate in lessons on using many reading strategies.
- Focus on comprehension.
- Integrate reading and writing activities.
- Read to learn new content across the curriculum

A Reading Workshop gives students an opportunity to communicate with their teacher as well as with other students – both orally and in writing. Students have opportunities to make choices about what they are interested in reading. They are also provided guidance in choosing from various types of literature – realistic fiction, nonfiction, poetry, etc. All of these experiences incorporate our local curriculum's standards as well as the state's standards.

We believe that the ultimate goal in reading is personal understanding and enjoyment. Within our Reading Workshop, we watch our students display these characteristics every day. They are truly motivated to read, and to read well.

We appreciate your continued involvement in your child's reading and invite you to come in and read with us.

Sincerely,
Susan Alston
Supervisor of Humanities K-12

Help at home....

You can strengthen the Reading Workshop activities as you read with your child every night!

Be sure to read every night. One book, two books, or a number of chapters! You decide. Practice is absolutely necessary! Depending on the book your child is reading, s/he may read to you, or you could take turns reading aloud with your child.

When reading with your child at home, here are some pointers to keep in mind:

- Begin books by looking closely at them. Notice the cover illustrations, the author, and the illustrator. Are there any clues as to what the book will be about? Does the back of the book have any information to give the reader? Take a picture walk through SOME of the pages. Discuss what you both think might happen in the book.
- Stop every once in a while to ask your child to retell the story. He or she should have a picture of it in his/her mind. If it's not clear that your child understands the story, backtrack and talk more together as the story unfolds.
- Stop every so often and ask your child to predict what might happen next. Make sure he has a reason for his thinking. (Not just, "I think Goldilocks will like the little bed." But, "I think Goldilocks will like the Little Bear's bed because she is little, too, and she liked his porridge and his little chair.")
- Encourage your child to ask questions while you read.
- After reading a story or chapter, stop and have a conversation about the book. What did you like/dislike? Did it remind you of another book or a time in your life? Why do you think the characters acted the way that they did? And so on.

When your child stumbles (or stops) at an unknown word, it's best to not just tell what the word is or to say simply, "Sound it out." Try using the following prompts instead:

- Get your mouth ready to say that word.
- Does that word look like any other word that you do know?
- Is there a chunk of the word that you do know?
- What word would make sense there?
- Do the letters match?

Have fun and be a model. Show your child that reading is important to you and your lifestyle. Talk, talk, talk, and listen, listen, listen about books and life. Oral language adds immensely to your child's vocabulary and fluency development.